



The Afar cultural genocide in Eritrea prompts new united efforts against Eritrean government

March 1, 2018 | Following months of talks and intense negotiations, several political action groups opposed to the historical persecution and ethnic-cleansing of the Indigenous Afar people in the African pariah state of Eritrea, have agreed to focus their collective efforts under the banner of a new organization: the **Eritrean Afar National Congress (EANC)**.

This new organization, which will hold a unity conference in Sweden in June 2018, will combine the forces of the **Eritrean Afar State in Exile (EASE)**, the **Eritrean Afar Democratic Movement (EADM)** and former members of several Afar opposition groups under one umbrella as a united front against the dictatorial Eritrean regime.

The Indigenous Afar, whose traditional territory stretches across Eritrea, Ethiopia and Djibouti, have been subjected to marginalization, persecution and ethnic cleansing at the hands of the Eritrean regime since 1991.

The human rights violations against the indigenous Afar were documented by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea and by the UN special investigators, Commission of Inquiry (COI) on Human Rights in Eritrea.

The Afar's homeland, which is known as Dankalia, includes highly strategic and resources rich land within Eritrea.

In 2015 and 2016, The UN Commission confirmed that Eritrean officials have committed crimes of persecution and crimes against humanity against Eritrean Afar population since 1991. The COI stated the actions by the Eritrean authorities "may be construed as an intentional act to dispossess them [the Afar] of their ancestral lands, their livelihood and their culture" and that:

The killing of members of the Afar ethnic group and reports of existence of mass-graves... have also triggered their displacement from their lands within the country and across borders to Ethiopia and Djibouti. This has posed great difficulty to their livelihoods as they depend on their traditional lands for the sustenance as an indigenous ethnic group.

The priorities of EANC will include:

- 1) Putting an end to the Eritrean government's racist policies of Tigriña assimilation of Afar people and their culture,
- 2) Putting an end to crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing of Afar nation,



- 3) Putting an end to the Afar refugee crisis and displacement of Afar people and exploitations of Afar land and resources in Eritrea,
- 4) Restoring Afar rights to self-determination and self-rule of Dankalia,
- 5) Protecting Afar indigenous rights to land and resources, and
- 6) The transformation of Eritrea from a tyrannical highly centralized military entity into a multi-ethnic, multi-regional and multi-religious constitutional democracy.

These priorities and more will be fleshed out and formalized at a EANC conference scheduled to be held in Sweden in June 2018.

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